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ABSTRACT

The needs for postsecondary education in Alaska are discussed in a policy statement covering the planning environment (economic and enrollment), need and demand for services, system responsiveness, and supporting resource requirements (faculty, facilities, and funding). Recommendations include the following: (1) Institutions should continue to improve and expand counseling and advisement services for existing and prospective students, with particular emphasis on meeting the needs of the adult continuing education student, and part-time learner, and other groups of nontraditional students such as single parents, women, rural students, and older citizens. (2) Guidelines and funding mechanisms for addressing the need for adult continuing education should be developed and coordinated with various providers of educational opportunities in academic institutions, governmental agencies, business, or industry. (3) The needs of education consumers should be clarified in surveys. (4) Manpower demand and supply analysis for selected fields should be conducted. (5) Regional (multi-state) planning and resource sharing should be encouraged. (6) A state-level student loan program should encourage access to any institution. (7) The concept of a state-wide postsecondary education agency is endorsed to plan postsecondary education and to advise the governor, the legislature, and the educational community. (8) Community colleges should maintain an open admissions policy and low levels of tuition and fee charges for community college students. Further suggestions are made for program offerings, vocational planning, adult basic education, and budgeting. (SW)

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Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

Policy Positions and Recommendations 1980-1985

HE 014 393

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PREFACE

This document is intended to serve as the basis for the planning activities of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education. It was developed over a twelve-month period and was first released in draft form in February, 1980. Copies of the draft were widely distributed and public comment was invited. Much of what was received through this public input process has been incorporated into this finalized document. The Commission wishes to acknowledge the value of those comments and suggestions and wishes to thank all those who took the time and effort to review the draft and offer their remarks.

Throughout the document reference is made to postsecondary education being comprised chiefly of public and private colleges, proprietary institutions, and vocational-technical institutions. It should be noted that although these components are discussed as separate discrete classifications, there is a great deal of overlap within these institutional types. Additionally, these classifications do not account for all educational activity at a postsecondary level. The intention is merely to create a framework for discussion of Alaska postsecondary education needs and concerns.

The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education serves both a coordinating and licensure role for postsecondary education in Alaska. It is the expressed intention of the Commission that no actions or statements be interpreted as discouraging either innovation in educational approach, or dissuasion of legitimate competition among institutions.

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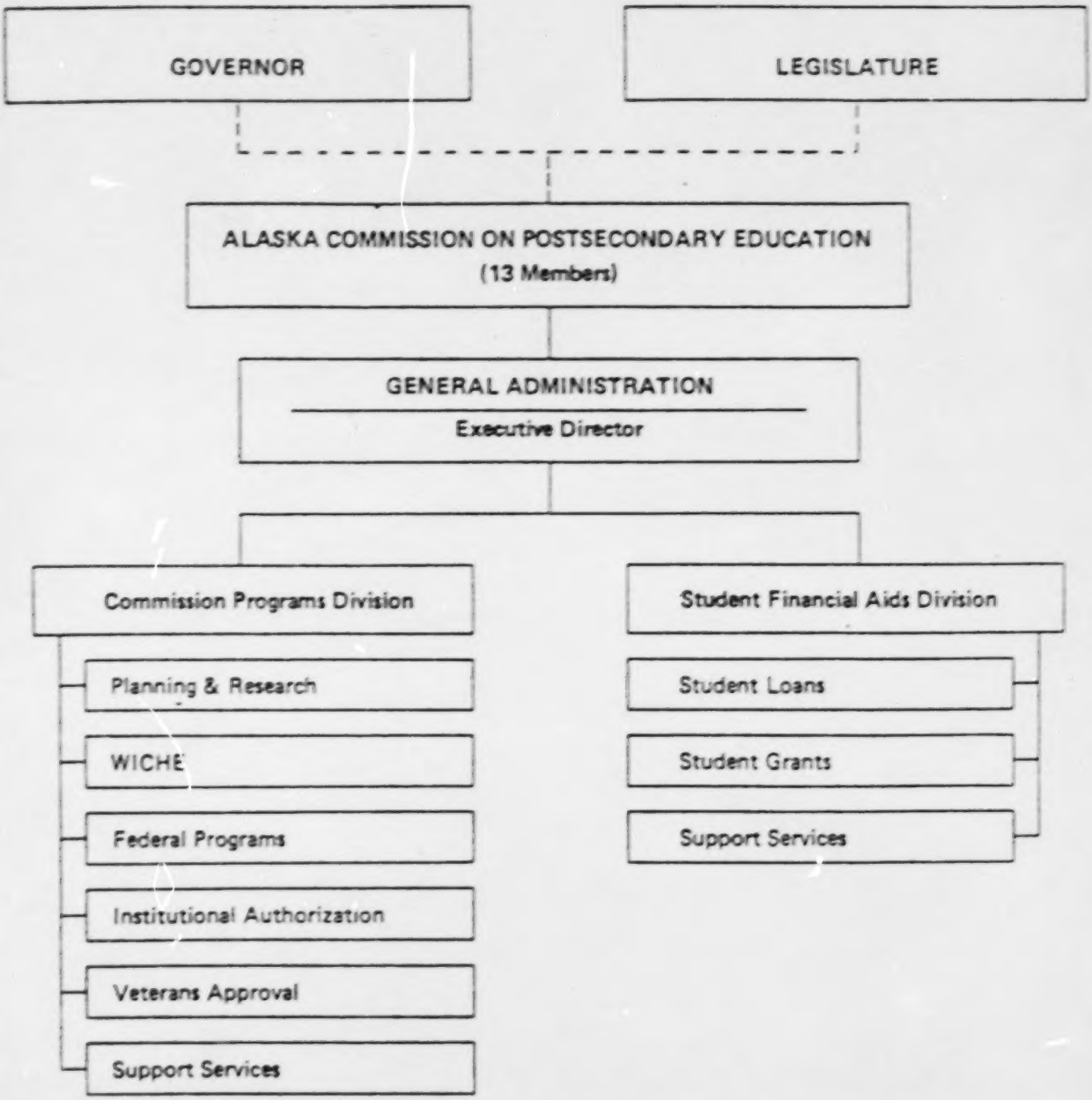

INTRODUCTION

The act creating the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education was passed by the 1974 Alaska State Legislature and signed into law by the Governor on May 9 of that year. The Commission was assigned a number of specific statutory charges, but the principal function was, and remains to be, the responsibility for comprehensive planning and coordination of Alaska's postsecondary educational institutions and resources.

Statutory Charges and Functions

The purpose of the Commission and legislative intent in its creation are contained in the enabling legislation under Chapter 78, AS 14.40.901, which states:

> The legislature finds and declares that it has become essential for Alaska to provide for a more efficient use of financial resources, both federal and state, in providing postsecondary educational services to its citizens. Thus, the state should create a more closely articulated system of planning for postsecondary education, with special reference to occupational education and the unique contribution made by the community colleges. The objective of secs. 901-915 of this chapter is coordinated, comprehensive planning for postsecondary education in Alaska, encompassing public, private and proprietary postsecondary educational institutions and agencies in the state, in order to lessen the disparate planning efforts of the several state agencies and others now planning one or more elements of postsecondary education. At the same time, the Education Amendments of 1972 (PL 92-318) affords the state the opportunity to draw together programs widely scattered outside the statewide university system but which are related to postsecondary, and especially higher, education that would be more effectively administered by a more visible single agency and thus more clearly and directly accountable to the legislature and to the people of Alaska.

The major functions of the Commission in supporting and carrying out this charge are presented in more detail in AS 14.40-909, Part (a), which states:

The commission has the following functions, advisory to the governing boards of institutions of public and private higher education in Alaska, to the governor, the legislature and to other appropriate state and federal officials:

> (1) coordinating the development of comprehensive plans for the orderly, systematic growth of public and private postsecondary education, including community colleges and occupational education, in the state and submit recommendations on the need for, and location of, new facilities and programs;
>
> (2) advise as to the functions and purposes of the colleges and universities, both public and private, in the state and counsel as to the programs appropriate to each;
>
> (3) review the annual budgets and capital outlay requests of the University of Alaska and of each of the private colleges and universities in the state, and present comments on the general level of support sought; and
>
> (4) review and advise as to the working of all consortia and other cooperative agreements between the institutions of higher education in the state that are parties to them.

In addition, Sec. 14.40.911 speaks to the data that may be needed from the postsecondary institutions to support the commission charges and functions:

> Collection of Data. The commission may require the institutions of public and private higher education, and other institutions of postsecondary education, in the state to submit data on costs, selection and retention of students, enrollments, plant capacities and use and other matters pertinent to effective planning and coordination, and shall furnish information concerning these matters to the governor, to the legislature and to other state and federal agencies as requested by them.

These selected charges and functions[1] designate the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education as the coordinating agency for all the postsecondary education in Alaska. Postsecondary education includes such

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[1]For a complete text of the Act and statutes governing the Commission on Postsecondary Education, see Appendix 1.

diverse segments as the traditional public and private colleges and universities; the occupational/vocational programs offered to adults; proprietary institutions and their programs; and continuing education and inservice training. Alaska spends over twice the national average per capita, in providing higher education to its citizens, yet little sound data is available for decisions regarding those expenditures. Capital budgets continue to be acted upon without the benefit of current space utilization data; new programs continue to be funded without any comprehensive look at program availability, demand, duplication, and long-range costs; new institutions, extension centers, and expansion of existing centers are proposed, approved and funded without any established objective criteria to guide such considerations. The Legislature and the Governor need the benefit of these kinds of data and services, and they need them to be supplied by professionals who owe no allegiance to any single institution or system of institutions and who can conduct research, collect and analyze data, and make recommendations for action. However, also needed is the input of the public, the people of the state who are involved in and concerned about higher education. This is the function of the Postsecondary Commission. It provides a forum for examining the postsecondary educational resources of Alaska, coordinating the activities and offerings of a diverse group of individuals and institutions, and planning for the efficient use of those resources.

Need for a Statement of Policy Positions and Recommendations

Although it is clear from reading the statutes what the Commission's charges and responsibilities are, it remains necessary for a plan of action

to be decided upon and promulgated to both the postsecondary educational community and the public for their comment and later for their information in terms of what to expect. All of the general areas of postsecondary education covered in the law governing the commission cannot be dealt with at once. Additionally, it is incumbent on the Commission to provide to the agencies and individuals with whom it will be working and from whom it will require information, exactly in which areas those requirements will be and in what sequence and manner the areas will be investigated and planned for. The present document is a statement of the Commission's policy positions and some recommendations for postsecondary education in Alaska. This statement is to serve as the basis for the Commission's planning activities over the next five years. Each year an operational planning addendum will be formally adopted as a supplement to this statement of policy positions and recommendations. That addendum will specifically delineate the planning activities for the Commission for each upcoming fiscal year. These addenda, together with the statement of policy positions and recommendations, will present the comprehensive operational plan for the Commission.

The statement of policy positions and recommendations is presented here in five sections. Section I will deal with the planning environment and a description of the present economic and population characteristics of the state and some projections for the planning period 1980-86. Sections II, III, and IV will deal with the major areas of statewide concern in post-secondary education; the need/demand for postsecondary education,

responsiveness of the postsecondary education system; and resources required to support the postsecondary education system. Section V will be a categorical listing of the positions and recommendations of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education which will have been presented throughout the text.

SECTION I

THE PLANNING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALASKA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Postsecondary Education

Much of what is postsecondary education in Alaska falls under the aegis of the University of Alaska System.[2] A central administrative staff is maintained at the Fairbanks campus to provide coordination and direction for the many elements which comprise the system under the guidance and governance of the Board of Regents. Coordinated system planning has taken place, but it has been hampered in a number of ways. The rapid growth of institutions, student enrollments, faculty, and facilities has tended to keep reality several steps ahead of planning.

Many of the university system's components have conducted planning for their own units and have done so quite successfully, but necessary impetus to bring this planning together centrally has been historically lacking. The University of Alaska has suffered in the past from what many management information systems experts refer to as "fragmentation". This refers to

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[2]The University of Alaska is comprised of the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, University of Alaska-Anchorage, University of Alaska-Juneau, Anchorage Community College, Chukchi Community College, Kenai Peninsula Community College, Ketchikan Community College, Kodiak Community College, Kuskokwim Community College, Matanuska-Susitna Community College, Northwest Community College, Prince William Sound Community College, Sitka Community College, Tanana Valley Community College, and a large number of extension and research centers and sites.

the fact that much of the information generated, and planning conducted, is done in semi-isolation. There is a need to focus on key points in the administrative structure where expansion of the planning management and evaluation capability will serve to streamline and simplify University coordination. The University has begun moving strongly in that direction during the past year.

Other areas of postsecondary education in Alaska include vocational-technical education, proprietary education, private non-profit higher education, and out-of-state postsecondary institutions and agencies. Vocational-technical education is largely administered by state, local and federal agencies. There has been some long-range planning done in this area and a five-year plan for vocational education in Alaska has been prepared by the state's vocational education planning task force. Wide participation from the postsecondary education community was provided for the writing of this plan, and it is a commendable attempt at statewide planning. However, the plan, written to conform with federal guidelines for obtaining funds, deals primarily with procedures and not issues in vocational education. Additional areas of occupational-vocational education and training are being done to a significant degree by Native corporations, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and federal programs funded under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.

Proprietary institutions in Alaska, those operating on a for-profit basis, are an emerging and quickly growing sector. Statewide planning and

coordination in this area is practically non-existent. The state Postsecondary Education Commission has taken steps to insure, as much as possible, that quality instruction is offered and that proprietary institutions do not misrepresent themselves to consumers. However, strong steps need to be taken so that these types of institutions are encouraged to organize themselves and provide mechanisms of coordination and evaluation.

Private, non-profit institutions are the fourth important area of Alaska postsecondary education. Since there are only two major institutions of this type in the state, coordination among them is usually active. However, their coordination with public and higher education is somewhat lacking. This will be addressed later in this document.

The final major area of postsecondary education in Alaska is that education and training offered in-state by out-of-state postsecondary institutions and agencies. Much of this effort is directed at military base operations; however, programs of a widely diverse nature are offered throughout the state. The activities of these institutions are controlled somewhat by the Postsecondary Commission in attempting to insure their quality, need, and reputation for the protection of Alaskan consumers.

Enrollments - Postsecondary

Enrollments in the postsecondary education institutions have reflected some levelling recently. This fact may be directly related to Alaska's economic situation which has fought valiantly since 1976 to overcome the major exodus

of industry and personnel that accompanied the termination of the Alaska oil pipeline project. Most economic experts feel that this is a temporary situation which will change toward continued growth at some time in the future. However, it is extremely difficult to get economists to agree when this resumption of growth will occur. The levelling off of enrollments in postsecondary education is an extremely volatile situation depending upon, among other things, the economic projects held in abeyance for various reasons, but which could rapidly change the entire enrollment situation in a few years.

Enrollments - High School Graduation Rates

While the changing attendance patterns and student mix in postsecondary education institutions reflect the fact that the campuses are no longer dominated by the 18-to-22 year old student, the impact of the high school seniors as an attendance base cannot be ignored.

National and Regional. It is well known among those involved in higher education that the traditional college-age population in the United States will decrease greatly in the next fifteen years. The number of eighteen-year-olds is estimated to have peaked in 1979 and is projected to decrease 18 percent by 1986. After a brief upturn, the number is projected to decline further, so that in 1991 it will be some 26 percent below the 1979 peak. Because of these projections, "declining enrollment" is one of the terms most frequently heard about the future of higher education. It is also known, in a general way, that the impact of those demographic

trends will differ among regions and states. Patterns of annual births will differ and past and future interstate migration will affect the future numbers of eighteen-year-olds.

The increase in 1995 graduates in almost all states reflects an increase in the number of births in 1977. Nationwide, this was a 5 percent increase over the birth rate for 1976. However, data for 1978 indicates that the nationwide total was virtually unchanged from 1977.

Nationally every state shows a decrease in projected high school graduates between 1979 and some point in the 1984-87 period; most show decreases of at least 10 percent and nearly half show decreases of 20 percent or more. These decreases and their magnitude seem relatively certain to occur. Generally, decreases of comparable magnitude have, in fact, occurred in the elementary grade enrollments, with the low point reflected in the 1978-79 enrollments in one of the grades between 4 and 7.

There are notable similarities among most of the states in some regions, and notable contrasts among the various regions. The northeast region estimates a 1994 low point which is 40 percent below the 1979 level, compared to a national low point in 1991 that is 26 percent below the 1979 level. Every state in the area extending from Massachusetts to Washington, D.C. shows a decrease of 35 percent or more between 1979 and 1993 or 1994. Only the three northern New England states show significantly smaller decreases.

The total for the northcentral region also reaches its low point in 1994 when it is 32 percent below the 1979 level. However, most states in this region reach their low point in high school graduates in 1991. The 1990's low points range from 36 percent to 28 percent below 1979, with the smaller decreases occurring in the southwestern part of the region.

The total for the southeast-southcentral area shows the smallest decrease between 1979 and the early 1990's of any of the regions in the U.S.; 13 percent in 1991. Most of the states in the region reach their 1990's low points in 1993 or 1995 with only four having lows in 1991, the year of the national low point.

The western region, which includes Alaska, shows a 1990's low point in 1991 that is 16 percent below the 1979 level and a 1995 figure only 2 percent below the 1979 level. California accounts for roughly half of the regional total and when California is excluded, the balance of the region shows a 1990 low point 8 percent below the 1979 level. This pattern for the western region contrasts dramatically with the pattern for the other three regions in the last few years of the projection period, due, in part, to a difference in the patterns of births since 1973. An interesting fact is that in most of the western states, a decrease in grade-to-grade ratios can be observed in recent years, indicating an increasing number of dropouts.

Alaska. Alaska's high-school graduate projections are similar to the pattern for the other western states. National projections indicate that

the low point will be about 1986 when the numbers of high school graduates will be 12 percent below 1979 levels. This trend will recover in 1989 to only 1 percent below 1979 levels and drop again to 6 percent below 1979 levels in 1991. It will again recover substantially in 1995 to 6 percent above 1979 levels.

Future enrollments in higher education in our state will, obviously, not depend solely on the size of the traditional college-age population or the flow of high school graduates. The rate of participation in higher education by these groups will, of course, influence enrollments.

Participation by older age groups will be an important factor as will the extent of full-time attendance versus part-time attendance. All of these factors require careful analysis. However, a realistic assessment of the potential impact of these factors leads to the conclusion that the change in the size of the traditional college-age group must be acknowledged as a crucial matter for higher education enrollments in the state.

Another factor that should be considered by postsecondary institutions in the state is the stated preferences of high school seniors in attending postsecondary education activities. About one-third of Alaska's 1980 seniors, responding to the Commission on Postsecondary Education's annual high school senior survey, indicated plans to attend an Alaskan post-secondary institution. Therefore, two-thirds of Alaska high school seniors in 1980 who plan to attend a postsecondary educational institution

immediately after high school are choosing to leave Alaska to do so. This has some ramifications for recruiting at the institutions and more importantly, some review of the types and quality of program offerings in the state's postsecondary educational institutions. Additional data indicates that of those high school seniors who plan on remaining in Alaska for their postsecondary education, 53.6 percent plan on attending a university center, 20.9 percent plan on community college attendance, 18.9 percent plan on attendance at an extension center or proprietary institution, and 6.6 percent plan on attending a private not-for-profit college in the state.

Program Offerings and Graduation Rates In Postsecondary Education

It is apparent from information collected by studies conducted by the Postsecondary Education Commission and others that an increase in program offerings in Alaska's postsecondary education sector is matched by an extremely low graduation rate. In discussing this issue regarding vocational education programs specifically, Kleinfeld and Wright (1979) state:

> The low number of graduates in some vocational programs, particularly in the community colleges, requires investigation. There may be no problem. As administrators suggest, the major cause may be that many students had no intention of completing a program. They were interested in getting just enough skills to get a job, in upgrading current job skills, or acquiring practical skills. However, this situation may also indicate dissatisfaction with program quality or other education problems. Moreover, students who leave programs at low skill levels may be in a poor long-term labor market position even if they locate an immediate job. (page 58)

Economic Factors

As previously mentioned, the state of the economy and population trends have a direct and substantial relationship to the stability and growth of postsecondary education. The Alaskan economy has been in a boom and bust cycle for many years, due mainly to the cycles of major projects and the relatively small population of the state. Post-oil pipeline recovery has been slow. The October 1979 quarterly report of the Division of Economic Enterprise concludes, however, that 1979 is the year that the post-pipeline economic letdown has bottomed out.

Final 1979 nonagricultural employment data shows that there was a slight increase of 1.5 percent in jobs filled statewide. Forecasts show a slight, 0.5 percent, employment increase from 1978 to 1979. A combination of declining interest rates, a more stimulative state government budget, increased drilling operations on the North Slope, and generally improved investment opportunities is projected to move the economy ahead at an increasing rate in future years, with annual average nonagricultural employment gains of 2.8 percent and 4.1 percent now forecasted for 1980 and 1981, respectively, by the Alaska Economic Information and Reporting System (AEIRS).

Anchorage consumer price inflation seems to have finally slowed up, beginning the year at a 9.8 percent rate and finishing the year at an 8.5 percent rate. Nationwide the inflation index for this same period stood at

13.4 percent. Despite the improving Anchorage 1979 picture, AEIRS is still forecasting about a 9.0 percent increase for 1980 and 1981. The Anchorage All Urban Consumer Price Index (CPIU), a measure of consumer price inflation, is used as an index of comparison by AEIRS against other economic indicators. Alaska's bank and savings and loan deposits continue to increase at year-to-year rates below that of the CPIU. On June 30, 1979 combined demand and time deposits at Alaska's commercial and mutual savings banks were up only 2.3 percent from a year earlier, while savings and loan association deposits were up only 3.6 percent. During the same period the Anchorage CPIU rose 10.5 percent, a common situation during an economic slowdown but one which is not projected to continue.

Beyond 1982 the Alaskan economy will be affected heavily by certain large projects. These projects include the Alpetco refinery in Valdez, the Pacific Alaska LNG plan in Nikiski (which now has a go-ahead from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission), the Northwest gas pipeline project and the German development project suggested for Point McKenzie. Between now and 1982 major projects affecting the economy will be a D-2 settlement and successful Beaufort Sea oil lease sale. (AEIRS, 1979)

Population Trends

Although the post-pipeline period did result in some decrease in Alaska's resident population, there has been a steady increase in Alaska's population between 1969 and 1976. However, since 1976 the population has fallen off slightly from 408,300 in 1976 to 407,200 in 1977 to 402,700 in

1978. Again, as with the economy, the population losses seem to have bottomed out in 1978, with the 1979 population level being slightly above the 1978 level at about 405,000. Moderate increases of 1 or 2 percent can be expected for the near future and the long-range picture will depend heavily on the development of the major economic projects mentioned previously.

Previous trends in population through 1978 show that Anchorage has followed the state picture quite closely, as one might expect. Fairbanks has registered larger declines but appears to be leveling off in 1979 or 1980. Juneau has registered steady increases since 1976, mainly reflecting increases in state government employment. Other areas where post-1976 increases rather than decreases occurred include: Bethel, Bristol Bay, Matanuska-Susitna; and outer Ketchikan.

State Support For Higher Education

Over the previous ten-year period support for higher education in Alaska has been excellent. In fact, in a 1979 publication which reviews the fifty states for levels of state support for higher education, M. M. Chambers points out that Alaska has received a substantially higher percentage increase in state appropriations than any other state. Of course there are some limitations to this figure when comparing Alaska to larger, more populous states. The percentage figures in this report refer only to rates of increase and not to any other relative ranking measures. For instance, a state with the highest percentage gain may be among the lowest states in the general adequacy of support to higher education. Also, measures such

as appropriations per citizen and per $1,000 of personal income put the states in a somewhat different perspective and thus different rankings. However, in Alaska's case most of these measures still put the state at or near the top in state support for higher education. Alaska spends over twice the national average per capita on higher education, and when comparing Alaska's percentage gain in state appropriations for higher education during the 1969-1980 period with the fifteen other least populous states, Alaska's percentage gain is approximately twice the next highest state and more than five times the gain for the state with the least gain.

Due to a number of problems and external circumstances however, the increases in University of Alaska's general fund appropriations for the last 4 years have averaged only about 10 percent. This trend may be abating somewhat as Alaska's economy recovers from the post-pipeline exodus. Alaska higher education is generally well-supported by the people of the state and since the trends of this support seem so closely related to the state's economy, the general feeling toward higher education and its much needed support should steadily improve.

SECTION II

NEED AND DEMAND FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SERVICES

This section on the need and demand for postsecondary education services in Alaska and each of the next three major sections of this report will attempt to describe the areas of postsecondary education in the state which need to be investigated and planned for under the charges given to the Postsecondary Education Commission. The method to accomplish this task, the resources and data needed, and recommendations for actions in each of the major areas will serve as the Commission's operational plan for the 5-year period from 1980-1985.

Need and Demand

Much of the need and demand for postsecondary education in our state can be determined in large part from the specific areas covered in the remaining sections of this report: Responsiveness of the Postsecondary Education System in Alaska, and Resources Required to Support the Postsecondary Education System in Alaska. However, most of these data are inferential and do not really get at the opinions of the consumers of postsecondary education, the methods of determining occupational supply and demand, the payoffs of obtaining a postsecondary education, or the methods of aiding students, both financially and otherwise, to greater opportunity for attendance in postsecondary education. Therefore, a short section on

determining these needs and meeting these demands is appropriate.

Changing Consumer Group

Even though much more information needs to be collected regarding the characteristics of the participants in postsecondary education in Alaska, the data that are available indicate that the traditional college-age (18-21) student is forming a smaller and smaller part of postsecondary education consumers in our state. More and more students are working part-time, married with families, interested in vocational training, and upgrading their present job skills through postsecondary education opportunities. Many more students over 40 are participating, and with the obvious increase in older students that will result from the unavoidable bulge in the 45-65 population in the near future, much more needs to be done to plan for these consumer needs.

1. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that institutions continue working to improve and expand counseling and advisement services for existing and prospective students, with particular emphasis being placed upon meeting the needs of the adult continuing education student, the part-time learner and other groups of nontraditional students (single parents, women, rural students, and older citizens).

2. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends a study involving the Commission, institutional representatives, and other appropriate agencies to develop definitions, guidelines, and possible funding mechanisms for addressing the expanding need for adult continuing education opportunities, and will work to coordinate the various providers of these opportunities whether they be educational institutions, governmental agencies, business or industry groups.

Consumer Needs

As the participants in postsecondary education change, so do their needs. Not to be overlooked, however, is the fact that even if the characteristics

of this group were not to change, many factors in the society and economy would mandate changing needs anyway. With the exception of the Commission's annual high school senior survey and some local surveys of high school seniors, very little is done to determine what consumers like or do not like about postsecondary education or what changes they would like to see in the system. It would be helpful to conduct more statewide surveys in this area.

3. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that postsecondary institutions and agencies in the state conduct more surveys of the needs of education consumers in order to be more responsive in their educational offerings and report the findings of those surveys to the Commission.

Occupational Supply and Demand

Data on occupational supply and demand are provided to some degree by the Department of Labor and other individuals and agencies in the State, but many problems exist in the classification and collection of these data, and most educational agencies and institutions have great difficulty using this information in their planning efforts. More cooperative work between state agencies and educational agencies and institutions in the methodology, definition, and analysis of these data might result in more useful information.

4. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends and requests the continued support and cooperation of institutional representatives, professional associations, the State Department of Labor, and the State Department of Education in conducting manpower demand and supply analysis for selected fields and in identifying historical employment patterns of graduates of Alaska's degree and certification programs with the objective of utilizing the results in the review of new

program proposals, the evaluation of existing programs, and the supplying of student career information.

Accessibility to Postsecondary Education

Providing programs of financial aid, counseling, and career information to the consumers of postsecondary education is a task that Alaska has handled well. However, much more needs to be done in expanding upon the efforts of the Department of Education's Career Information System, the State Student Loan Program, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education's (WICHE) Exchange Program and similar programs. Alaska's ability to provide a complete range of postsecondary offerings with our small and dispersed population may never be completely possible within the State. Therefore, more effort should be made to provide our students with the means and opportunity to pursue postsecondary education in its many forms in other states when it is not feasible to do so in Alaska. However, some areas, such as graduate education, may need a further look toward expansion in selected areas within Alaska.

5. The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses the efforts of the Alaska Occupational Information Coordinating Committee in the development of the Alaska Career Information System, and will continue to provide information on Alaska's postsecondary education programs for inclusion in that system.

6. The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses the concept of regional (multi-state) planning and resource sharing as exemplified by the efforts of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and the thirteen western compact states.

7. The Commission on Postsecondary Education supports continued provision of educational opportunity and choice through a state-level student loan program which permits Alaskans to seek their educational goals where they best feel these goals can be met.

8. The Commission on Postsecondary Education supports and encourages the continued development of Alaska's graduate programs of study where an expressed need is evident, and the continued encouragement of attracting and enrolling qualified students through the establishment of state-funded graduate fellowships for selected programs in Alaskan institutions.

Value of Postsecondary Education

More study and investigation needs to be done to provide consumers with some specific indicators of the financial and academic benefits to be derived from postsecondary education. National studies have indicated that the economic value of a postsecondary education is still very attractive and the relative competitive position in the job market for those with postsecondary education, as opposed to those without it, is marked.

9. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that postsecondary institutions in the state, in cooperation with the Commission, work to provide some measures of the value of postsecondary education that is being provided to students in Alaska.

SECTION III

RESPONSIVENESS OF THE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM IN ALASKA

A determination needs to be made as to the appropriateness of the postsecondary education enterprise in the state. This determination should involve such areas as the kinds, types and locations of the institutions and agencies involved; the effectiveness and quality of the programs offered; the balance of public, private and proprietary education offered; the mechanisms which allow public input; the degree of duplication which exists; the standards and criteria by which the system operates; and the ease with which the public is offered this education. These areas should be considered in terms of information dissemination, sufficient class offerings for the awarding of a timely degree, admission and transfer policies; and the mechanisms and processes of planning and evaluation which make the enterprise responsive, forward-looking and self-correcting. Much of the study and research examining these areas of concern is that which should be conducted by, or coordinated through, the statewide agency for coordination of postsecondary education.

10. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recognizes the responsibilities of the governing boards of the postsecondary institutions in Alaska and endorses the present concept of a statewide postsecondary education agency as a coordinating board. The role of this agency should continue to be that of engaging in continuous statewide postsecondary education planning and the provision of independent and objective advice to the Governor, the Legislature, and the various components that comprise postsecondary education in the state.

Diversity in Postsecondary Education

Few would disagree that it is in the best interest of the state to encourage diversity in the support and control of postsecondary education in Alaska. The proprietary sector of postsecondary education is probably the best example of the diversity that should be encouraged in Alaska postsecondary education. Proprietary education in Alaska consists largely of institutions offering specific career or vocational preparation and training in one or more related fields. This is a growing and extremely viable portion of postsecondary education in the state. Operating for profit, these institutions are business enterprises that cannot survive without being creative and quickly responsive to the needs of consumers. Quality and integrity are controlled both through the courts and through periodic review and licensing by the State's Postsecondary Education Commission. These institutions operate mainly in the non-academic degree area and serve occupational training and upgrading needs as well as education in interest-only areas. In Alaska, as in many states, this sector of postsecondary education is subject to much more regulation and accountability than either public or private higher education.

11. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recognizes and endorses the valuable contribution to Alaska's postsecondary education resources which is made by proprietary institutions operating in the state and will continue to include information on these resources in its annual directory of postsecondary educational institutions. Further, the Commission recognizes the need for more comprehensive, accurate information on proprietary education in Alaska and will cooperate with the schools and their organizations in the development of an adequate information base on proprietary education.

In Alaska, the primary alternative to attending the University of Alaska

for an academic, degree-oriented program, is with one of the two private, not-for-profit, higher education institutions. Alaska's private colleges and universities are small and have had a difficult time obtaining funds, both because their alumni pool is relatively small and because Alaska's population is also quite small, with a high percentage of the tax funds going to support the public education system. In spite of this, private higher education leaders in our state are extremely dedicated and competent. It is important that this growing, excellent alternative to our public higher education enterprise be vigorously supported in any way possible.

12. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recognizes and endorses the valuable contribution to Alaska's postsecondary educational resources which is made by private colleges and universities at little or no direct cost to the State of Alaska, and endorses the exploration of methods by which more state support and encouragement can be directed to these institutions.

The non-academic degree student has a wide variety of choices including the public community colleges and the proprietary institutions; however, in the area of vocational-technical education, Alaska also has two additional public institutions: the Hutchison Career Center, which is affiliated with a local school district, and the Alaska Skill Center, operated under the aegis of the State Department of Education. These institutions have been quite successful in attracting students and in placing graduates throughout the state. The coordination with employers, career counseling, and program planners has been exemplary.

13. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recognizes and endorses

the valuable contribution to Alaska's postsecondary educational resources which is made by the vocational-technical institutions operating in the state.

14. The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses and recommends increased coordination in the formation and/or expansion of vocational-technical facilities and programs, and recommends that such coordination incorporate consideration of existing programs offered by community colleges and private proprietary schools.

Community Colleges. Alaska's economy is based substantially on vocational-education type industries such as fishing, mining, oil production, and forestry. The need for a manpower base with skills and knowledge in these areas and their related industries is extremely important. The community colleges in our state are unique institutions to accomplish these needs through both local and state input. The community colleges combine many of the strong points of vocational-technical institutions with those of the academically-oriented 4-year schools, in both the public and private sector. Students wishing a grounding in both the skills necessary for occupational training and a general education as a base for continued higher education are admirably served by the community college.

15. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recognizes and endorses the unique role and mission of the community colleges as the primary means of providing for, and achievement of, access to postsecondary education.

16. The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses and recommends the continuation of "open door" admissions to the state's community colleges and the maintenance of low levels of tuition and fee charges for community college students.

As is implied in the name, these colleges are dedicated to meeting the needs of the communities in which they are located. They tend to be flexible and quickly responsive to demands of the student body and local

community or industrial interests. Advisory councils which are broadly representative of the area and interests served by the college are an integral part of the operations of the community college.

17. The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses the responsiveness and flexibility of community colleges to reflect local needs, and recommends the continuation of the balanced approach between academic, occupational/vocational, and general education, public interest, and personal development programs based upon the guidance and advice of local citizen policy advisory councils.

Community colleges also typically deal with what is commonly called the non-traditional student who may be part-time, working, attending at night, 25-40 years old, interested in a career change, have family responsibilities, and be in need of financial assistance. Also, many of these students are not interested in obtaining a degree but only in limited coursework for job entry or upgrading. This type of student imposes many needs that have not been typically met by traditional instructional methods. They may require innovative, non-traditional methods of instruction, as well as faculty specifically trained to accommodate such students. For students beginning a new career or moving into a unique aspect of a continuing career, arrangements in cooperative education, work study, and internships can be an extremely valuable aspect of the education program.

18. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that institutions continue to seek methods of incorporating the practical world of work into academic programs of study whenever appropriate and feasible, through such arrangements as internships, work-study, practica, etc.

This balance between academic and occupationally-oriented programs can cause some confusion and frustration to the student wishing to continue working toward a four-year degree. Counseling and student advisement are extremely important for the varied student population served by community colleges. Transferring to a four-year institution after a few courses or a few years of work at a community college can be a disappointing and unfortunately discouraging experience without careful program planning.

19. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that representatives of the four-year and two-year institutions, both public and private, work cooperatively with Commission staff in developing a guide on the transferability of course work and programs between and among Alaskan institutions, referring to applicable credit transfer and type of transfer (elective credits, major field of study credits, etc.).

Postsecondary Planning

The state's Postsecondary Education Commission holds a unique place in Alaska postsecondary educational evaluation and planning as it does in many states. It does and should represent a buffer between the executive and legislative branches of government and the postsecondary educational community. It plays an important role and it would be very difficult for any other agency in the state to assume its function. One of the problems in evaluating institutions of postsecondary education has been to obtain the judgment of professionally qualified persons who are at the same time removed from the actual operation or control of the enterprise. Obviously, the executive officer of an institution and the administrative staff are qualified and responsible for the internal operations of that institution, but when evaluation of more than that particular institution is concerned,

the executive and staff cannot be regarded as disinterested parties. Governing boards are often said not to be impartial in the area of statewide evaluation and planning because they are closely identified with their institution and/or institutions, are not professional educators, and traditionally leave educational matters to the faculty. Peer evaluation, such as accrediting, is extremely valuable as an indicator or a measure of quality and effectiveness, but cannot stand alone within a statewide planning or evaluation context. Government officials are not usually acceptable to the educational community, because they are perceived to threaten academic freedom. Lay committees representing various constituencies are not acceptable to many, because they are not professionally qualified. Independent consultants are used quite often, but criticism here stems from the fact that many times consultants, in making recommendations, tend to support the ideas and pre-conceived notions of those who hire them. Therefore, the coordinating commission, although not free from all these criticisms, represents a unique compromise that allows it to operate both in and outside of education, while maintaining credibility in both.

In Alaska, several agencies have conflicting, or at least overlapping, responsibilities in postsecondary education. This is difficult to avoid and can be a place where coordination by the Postsecondary Education Commission can be very valuable. The 1979 meeting of educational agencies in Sitka was a major step in providing a mechanism for this coordination.

Academic program planning and review is integral to all such coordination and cooperation, and the Commission is statutorily charged with the function of information collection, review, and dissemination on the offerings of the various agencies and institutions operating in Alaska.

Program review is one of the most sensitive aspects of statewide coordination as it attempts to discover what institutions of postsecondary education are doing in terms of teaching, research, and public service. In the present climate of accountability in Alaska, increasing emphasis will undoubtedly be placed on the methods and procedures used to evaluate the performance of present programs before embarking on new ones.

Several questions regarding the review procedure need to be answered. Some of the most important ones include: Which programs are to be reviewed? What criteria are to be applied in the judging? What procedure is to be used in the evaluations? However, a first step in any program review is to identify what programs currently exist.

20. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that information be submitted on all current postsecondary educational program offerings in the state by public, private, and proprietary institutions and that this information be kept in the Commission offices for dissemination as the official state "register of program offerings". Further, that this register will be changed as soon as possible after program additions, deletions, or modifications by each institution. Since this register will constitute the base data for all Commission dissemination of data and analysis of program offerings by postsecondary institutions in the state, it is the responsibility of the institution to provide prompt and accurate information concerning its programs.

21. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that Commission staff, in cooperation with representatives of public and

private colleges and universities, work to establish acceptable criteria for academic program review at the state level.

In reviewing academic programs a distinction should be made between the criteria necessary for the review of existing programs and the criteria necessary for the approval of new program proposals. In reviewing existing programs some or all of the following factors should be considered: the number of graduates in the program for each of the last five years; the number of students enrolled in the program (entry and drop-out rates); the size of classes and the cost of courses identified as integral elements in the program; cost per program graduate; faculty workload; program quality as reflected by its regional or national reputation; faculty qualifications and level of position achieved by graduates of the program; total production of a program's graduates from all institutions of the state, region and/or nation; the economics and/or improvement in quality to be achieved by consolidation of the program; general student interest; demand trends for the program; and the appropriateness of the program to institutional role or mission.

22. The Commission on Postsecondary Education requests institutional cooperation in reviewing academic programs offered in Alaska, with particular attention being given to those programs of study which appear to be duplicative or show evidence of persistent low productivity. This review will consist of a general program inventory and specific need, cost, demand, and quality criteria being developed for in-depth review.

Although some of these indicators might be applied to new programs as well, some specific criteria to evaluate new program proposals should include: projected student demand for the program; current and projected need for

graduates of the program, as stated by employers in the region or state; production of graduates from similar programs in the state; proposed size of classes; cost of resources required; accreditation plans with timetable; and funds currently available or proposed to be available.

23. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that no new degree program or major course series be approved by the board of regents or trustees of an Alaskan postsecondary education institution until that proposal has been reviewed by the Commission and recommendations have been reported back to the appropriate board in accordance with AS 14.40.909 (a) (1). Upon consideration of a new degree program or major course series by the governing board of an Alaskan postsecondary education institution, a letter of intent should be forwarded to the Commission to initiate this review process.

24. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that neither the Governor nor the Legislature approve, within the confines of their respective time schedules, the expenditure of state funds for the support of any new degree program in an Alaskan postsecondary education institution which has not undergone review by the Commission.

It must be determined which programs will be reviewed since a comprehensive review of all programs would be virtually impossible. Almost all states with program review mechanisms at the state level employ some sort of screening criteria to select a smaller number of programs for more extensive evaluation. The types of indicators used to identify programs for more intense review vary considerably from state to state but usually include the areas of cost, productivity, need, duplication and quality.

Another important area of program review is that of consistency and clarity of the listed program offerings. Many times the catalog offerings are inconsistent from institution to institution, explanations of courses are vague and unclear, and course offerings do not correspond fully to degree

program offerings. This is difficult to control, but should be reviewed thoroughly especially for the benefit of students' clear understanding.

25. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that each postsecondary education institution review its present or proposed catalog to ascertain what degree opportunities are being offered to prospective students and to compare these offerings with actual course and program availability to determine the timeliness of degree completion opportunities and report the findings of this review to the Commission.

Related to this is the problem of degree titles meaning very different things among institutions in the same state with improper, unclear, or lack of explanation of this difference to the students. This area should also be reviewed thoroughly for consistency and clearness of degree title usage.

26. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends the Chancellor for Community Colleges of the University of Alaska examine the use of Associate degree titles in the community colleges of the state, with the objective of ensuring consistency of usage among institutions, and report the results of this examination to the Commission.

27. The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends the University of Alaska review the use of its degree titles, beyond the Associate degree, to ensure continuity throughout the state system and continuity to listed and Board-approved degree program offerings and report the results of this review to the Commission.

28. The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that the private colleges and universities operating in Alaska review the use of their degree titles to ensure continuity with approved degree program offerings and report the results of these reviews to the Commission.

There have been many identified needs for new degree programs in the state, but one which comes up consistently across the state is a need for more teacher training for Alaska with particular emphasis on vocational teacher

training. This area should be investigated and steps taken to meet the need if appropriate.

29. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that the University of Alaska, in cooperation with appropriate agencies and groups, conduct specific professional field studies to evaluate the preparation and performance of program graduates and propose specific improvements, as needed.

In dealing with and examining the diverse institutions and programs, the Commission will constantly seek the aid, advice, and cooperation of the institutional representatives and agency experts. Alaska's postsecondary education resources span the spectrum from adult basic education to post-doctoral research and studies. The multitude of individuals, agencies, and institutions must be encouraged to continue meeting and serving the needs of Alaskans and should be given as much flexibility and responsibility as possible while still maintaining a coordinated approach to postsecondary education resource management.

30. The Commission on Postsecondary Education encourages and endorses institutional efforts and research into innovative instructional delivery methods and recommends expanded state support for alternate forms of instruction in an effort to serve the needs of the non-traditional student and the needs of rural Alaska.

31. The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses the work of the State Planning Council for Vocational Education and the State Advisory Council for Vocational Education for their work in the evaluation and planning for vocational/occupational education in the state through documents like the State Plan for Vocational Education and Articulation in Vocational Education.

32. The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses the cooperative efforts of the public schools, the private contractors, the Native corporations, the private colleges and schools and the community colleges to eliminate functional illiteracy through the provision of Adult Basic Education programs throughout Alaska.

33. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recognizes the overlapping responsibilities of the State Department of Education and the local school districts with the Board of Regents and the community colleges in offering community schools and community service courses and programs, and recommends that a study be conducted to identify and define these programs, their differences and their similarities, and delineate responsibilities between and among the responsible agencies, and further, the Commission encourages cooperative planning to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts.

Tasks To Be Accomplished

The statutes governing the Commission's operation mandate that certain activities be pursued and certain recommendations be made as to the structure, composition, and performance of postsecondary education. In the major area of Responsiveness these areas will include the following:

A. Scope, Location, and Types of Program Offerings

1. Inventory of programs offered by the state's public and private educational institutions.

This will give the Commission an assessment of the types and scope of present program offerings throughout the state. Decisions as to duplication of offerings, level of offerings, geographic appropriateness of offerings, correspondence with catalogs, and background for further analysis in enrollments, graduation rates, placement performance, costs, and faculty workloads will be based on such inventory.

B. Performance Measures of Programs

1. Number of program graduates over a five-year period.

Although program graduates are only one aspect of assessing the adequacy of academic programs, from a statewide viewpoint it is an important one. It does not take away from the importance of community services to students but is a measure of the effectiveness of a degree program and, further, the results tend to focus attention on whether the purposes of the program are appropriate.

2. Student Participation:

   This aspect can be investigated by obtaining enrollment data for program offerings over some period that will indicate a trend.

3. Follow-up of Graduates:

   Information pertaining to the placement and follow-up of program completers will also indicate to some degree the success of the program.

4. Faculty Workloads:

   This indicator, tempered with differing load requirements by discipline, is a measure of the amount of time that a faculty member can spend with any one student and the general level of depth that a faculty member can devote to a class.

5. Quality Indicators:

   These indicators give some feel for the level of expertise imparted to the student, professional discipline evaluations of the program, and responsiveness of the program to meeting appropriate and reasonable times for program length. Some of the specific indicators to use include:

   a. Average length of time full-time students need to complete program requirements.

   b. Percentage of students that complete the program annually.

   c. Professional examination or requirements for employment (percent of graduates to pass professional examinations and percent of placement of graduates in the field).

   d. Types and results of accreditation reviews.

   e. Criteria, results, and plans for evaluation of faculty.

   f. Professional standing on the basis of any national rankings or regional rankings.

   g. Library support for the program.

6. Transferability of Credits:

   The ease and consistency of credit transfer between and among similar programs in the state needs to be determined. A guide should be developed which outlines and specifies which

courses transfer fully to what programs in the state. This also is some indication of the similarity of degree titles and meaning of degree titles throughout the state.

7. Duplication of Offerings:

Although some duplication of programs is necessary and even desirable, other duplication is unneccessary and even counterproductive. Production of graduates from similar programs in the state, employment opportunities, and geographical appropriateness for the program both in terms of physical location and related program support are areas of information to obtain. Additionally, these types of data provide a source of information to determine unneccessary duplication between public, private, and proprietary areas. The area of overlapping responsibilities of state agencies in post-secondary education can be addressed more fully with information in this area.

8. New Program Offerings:

In order to remain current in the total statewide assessment of program performance the Commission must be involved in the process of new program approval by submitting recommendations to the appropriate agency before final approval is acted upon. During this new program approval process the following factors should be considered.:

a. Listing of the curriculum
b. Prerequisites
c. Credit awarded
d. Method of instruction
e. Degree proposed
f. Relation to institutional plan
g. In-state need
h. Student demand
i. Manpower opportunity
j. Duplication or cooperation with similar programs in the state and the region
k. Direct costs
l. Indirect costs
m. Reallocation involved
n. A projected cost for five years
o. Proposed source of funding
p. Related program support
q. Faculty and staff required
r. Facilities required
s. Administration required
t. Accreditation timetable, ultimate goal, method of meeting this goal

u. Method of evaluation and criteria for success
v. What is considered adequate, good, or excellent funding
w. Availability of student aid

By gathering information regarding public, private, and proprietary educational resources in these areas in a systematic manner, the Commission will develop the base from which sound planning and coordination can evolve, and the state's desire for coordinated planning for the efficient use of Alaska's postsecondary educational resources can be more fully realized.

SECTION IV

RESOURCES REQUIRED TO SUPPORT POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN ALASKA

In any discussion of postsecondary education, it should be kept foremost in mind that the entire structure and support of postsecondary education is built around the academic instructional program and the needs of the consumers of postsecondary education. Once the academic content, methodologies and directions have been set, then the support structure can be determined. This support structure generally will be composed of faculty and staff, facilities and equipment, and funds for the operation. Evaluating the adequacy of these support areas throughout the state is an area with which the Commission on Postsecondary Education has been charged. It is important, therefore, to describe the areas to be investigated, delimit the types of information necessary to make these determinations and make specific recommendations for action.

In all considerations, however, it must be remembered that Alaska, even more than most states, must operate within some very limiting parameters. The population base and student base is small. The geographic delivery areas can be quite immense at times, while population concentrations and hence postsecondary education target areas can be quite small. Within this operational environment, all individuals, agencies, institutions, and organizations offering or requesting postsecondary education services must be acutely aware of the need for cooperative planning and the avoidance of unnecessary duplication of effort or

unwarranted competition.

34. The Commission on Postsecondary Education encourages the governing boards of the public and private colleges and universities operating in Alaska to be particularly sensitive to the limited parameters of the state's resources, both human and fiscal, and cooperatively avoid needless duplication and competition, especially within the confines of a restricted geographic area.

35. The Commission on Postsecondary Education encourages and endorses the maintenance of close cooperation and coordination between the state's community colleges, vocational-technical institutions and proprietary institutions to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts and unwarranted competition, particularly within the confines of a restricted geographic area.

Faculty and Staff Support

Many of the studies and concerns relating to postsecondary education resources deal with the faculty quality, workload, and distribution in terms of academic rank. Staffing considerations include the staff support and administration required for the size of both the faculty and student body. In terms of the demand for faculty, the most common criterion is the student-faculty ratio which is a measure of the need for faculty, by discipline and class size. This is obviously very difficult to determine but should be based on not only expected student-faculty ratios and trends in enrollment, but on some less critical but important assumptions regarding admission and retention policies, distribution of institutional course offerings and level of instruction, provision for new facilities, proportion of staff involved in research, appointment standards, and annual rate of faculty and staff loss. It is difficult but necessary that the Commission establish some method of evaluating the need and requests for

new faculty throughout the state in order to make informed recommendations about the funds requested for this use. Halstead (1974) recommends that a procedure for estimating future teaching faculty needs should look similar to the following:

1. Obtain for at least the last 5-year period the number of student credit hours classified by level of instruction (junior college, senior college, university), and field of study.

2. Convert the number of credit hours in each field of study and at each level of instruction to percentages of the total instruction at each type of institution. Thus, for one year at all senior colleges 10,000 credit hours in English instruction at the lower division level might equal 5 percent of the total instruction (200,000 credit hours) offered.

3. On the basis of past trends and stated assumptions project the future share (percentage) of total instruction in each field-level combination. . . . .

4. For each type of institution project total enrollment during each year of the projection period. Convert to full-time equivalent students and, in turn, to total instructional load in student credit hours (one FTE student is usually equal to 12 to 15 credit hours).

5. To determine projected instruction loads, apply the projected share

percentages in each field-level combination to projections of total instruction load.

6. For each type of institution, subject field and level of instruction, determine planned student-faculty ratios in terms of student credit hours of instruction per FTE teaching faculty member.

7. The number of FTE teaching faculty required in each discipline, by level of instruction and type of institution, can now be determined by applying the student-faculty ratios to the number of student credit hour instructional loads predicted in step 5.

8. New annual staff requirements can be expected to equal new additional staff requirements based on enrollment as calculated in step 7, plus replacement of yearly staff losses through resignation, retirement or death. (pg. 391)

Non-teaching staff level of support should also be evaluated as to the numbers, types, and distribution by budget category. Although many Alaska-specific requirements will have to be met, methods for determining this level of support already exist in many states including California, Texas, New York, Arkansas, and Georgia.

Faculty Workloads

A basic misconception about faculty workload analysis at the state level is that this analysis is predicted solely on increasing the load to save

money. It is at least equally important to assess current faculty workloads to determine if more faculty time can be spent in the classroom and less on administrative and committee duties. This accomplishes the end of most efficiently using our valuable faculty resources without necessarily increasing their loads. Information regarding the classes, contact hours and enrollments of each faculty member's load as well as administrative, committee, departmental research, and other duties are necessary to make this determination.

Facilities Inventory

The first step in determining the adequacy and efficiency of the physical facilities provided for the support of the postsecondary education enterprise is to assess the characteristics, number, and location of the presently existing facilities. Frequently state level agencies, and many times institutions, are not aware of all the facilities in use or owned by public institutions and even less aware of this fact at private institutions. It is difficult to go much farther with physical facilities assessment or planning until what is presently available is known. This type of inventory usually describes building characteristics in terms of numbers and types of rooms available and several other interior and exterior building characteristics. Although some federally funded studies of facilities were done in this manner by the University of Alaska several years ago, no continuing statewide effort in determining inventory of facilities has been done to include public, private, and proprietary postsecondary education.

Facilities Utilization

Once the existence, location, condition, and characteristics of all postsecondary educational facilities have been determined by a facilities inventory process, it is important to know what the facilities are being used for and some indicators of the amount and efficiency of their usage. Determinations of the adequacy of the capital budget request can be based substantially on the results of facilities utilization data.

Normally, facilities utilization concerns itself with instructional space and is concerned with how space is being used to carry out the instructional function. Although this is traditional, it is also important to know information about non-instructional and/or auxiliary space such as student unions, office space and physical plant environmental support.

One of the difficult and continuing problems in this area is establishing fair and equitable norms that incorporate the special characteristics and restraints of localized areas. Whether acceptable usage of a classroom is 20 hours per week, 30 hours per week, or 3 hours per week tends to depend on the type of facility, the type of instruction and the needs of the students. However, some indicators of efficiency need to be provided in this area and a place to start is with some national standards.

36. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that a cooperative effort, involving Commission staff, institutional representatives, the Governor's Office of Budget and Management, and the Division of Legislative Finance, be made to determine a workable and continuing process of facilities inventory and utilization that can be used for all phases of educational planning and in reviewing capital

budget requests.

37. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that Alaska's colleges and universities, both public and private, explore and expand upon the joint use of facilities whenever possible.

New Institutions

In meeting the legislative charge of determining the size, appropriateness, and location of postsecondary institutions in the state, the Postsecondary Education Commission, in cooperation with institutional representatives, needs to consider the limitations on size, cost, and minimum requirements necessary to consider building new campuses in Alaska. This determination should also be linked to the existing facilities inventory and utilization data as well as to alternatives for sharing facilities and combining programs in public, proprietary, and private sectors.

38. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska adopt a policy describing the criteria necessary for the establishment of new community colleges and extension centers and incorporate in those establishment criteria a review by the Commission in accordance with AS 14.40.909(a) (1).

39. The Commission recommends that neither the Governor nor the Legislature approve, within the confines of their respective time schedules, the expenditure of state funds for the support of a proposed or newly established institution of postsecondary education or extension center which has not undergone review by the Commission.

Budget Review

Review and recommendations regarding the budget requests of public institutions should be tied to resources in faculty and staff, goals and mission of the institutions, programs offered, duplication of effort, facilities data, and ability of the state to pay. This review process

should also be closely coordinated with institutions involved, the Governor's Office of Budget and Management and the Division of Legislative Finance.

40. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that the Governor's Office of Budget and Management and the Division of Legislative Finance continue working with Commission staff and the public institutions of postsecondary education in the refinement and improvement of a more descriptive budgeting system for postsecondary education, incorporating reporting requirements of various state and federal agencies.

41. The Commission recommends that neither the Governor nor the Legislature take final action, within the confines of their respective time schedules, on the budget requests, operating or capital, from institutions of postsecondary education for state assistance until and unless the budget requests have undergone review by the Commission in accordance with AS 14.40.909(a)(3).

It is quite important that the costs of postsecondary education be understood in detail in order to make logical and informed decisions about the budget requests of the institutions. This detailed analysis is not available and should be pursued through establishment of a cost study procedure that will be updated annually.

42. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that an instructional cost study be conducted for Alaska's public postsecondary education institutions as a cooperative effort of the institutions, the Governor's Office of Budget and Management, the Division of Legislative Finance, and the Commission.

43. The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that no new approaches to the funding methods for postsecondary education be made, such as formula budgeting, until such time as a comprehensive instructional cost study is conducted and analyzed and the applicability of such methods as formula budgeting are examined in reference to the results of such a study.

Data Needs

In meeting the statutory charges of the Commission and in keeping with the policy positions and recommendations set forth in this document, it will be necessary for a substantial amount of data to be collected. These data can vary from project to project or from one time to another, but certain data will need to be routinely collected. The types of data which will be needed will not be comprehensively listed as part of this document; however, such a list would at least include the following:

1. A display of the instructional activity (student credit-hours, student-contact hours, faculty-contact hours) by department, discipline and course level by semester for each postsecondary education institution in the state.

2. A display of the direct costs by type of instruction, by department and course level for the most recent fiscal year for each postsecondary education institution.

3. A summary of the number of employees by sex and race identification by manpower resource category as of the HEGIS census date for enrollment.

4. A summary of the number of instruction/research employees by tenure status, by age range, rank, salary, and department as of the HEGIS census date for enrollment.

5. A summary of the activity distribution in terms of service months and/or full-time equivalent counts of instruction/research employees, by department, rank, and institution by semester, as of the third week following the end of the semster.

6. A presentation of the source of all unrestricted current fund revenues. Shown for the most recent fiscal year.

7. A matrix display of the source of current funds (revenues) by their use for the most recent fiscal year by institution.

8. A display of information regarding endowment and similar funds for the most recent fiscal year with emphasis on their source and age.

9. A display of the amount of physical plant indebtedness for the most recent fiscal year by institution.

10. A description of the location, condition, and building characteristics of all postsecondary educational facilities in the state, by institution and/or control.

11. An analysis of the use of buildings, rooms, instructional and non-instructional space by assignable area for all postsecondary educational institutions in the state.

SECTION V

SUBJECT REFERENCE FOR COMMISSION

RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY POSITIONS

This section provides a reference by subject area to the specific recommendations made and the policy positions taken by the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education.

I. Need and Demand for Postsecondary Education Services

A. Adult Continuing Education and Part-Time Learners

(#1) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that institutions continue working to improve and expand counseling and advisement services for existing and prospective students, with particular emphasis being placed upon meeting the needs of the adult continuing education student, the part-time learner and other groups of nontraditional students (single parents, women, rural students, and older citizens).

(#2) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends a study involving the Commission, institutional representatives, and other appropriate agencies to develop definitions, guidelines, and possible funding mechanisms for addressing the expanding need for adult continuing educational opportunities, and will work to coordinate the various providers of these opportunities whether they be educational institutions, governmental agencies, business or industry groups.

B. Needs and Desires of Consumers of Education

(#3) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that postsecondary institutions and agencies in the state conduct more surveys of the needs of education consumers in order to

be more responsive in their educational offerings and report the findings of these surveys to the Commission.

C. Manpower Demand Supply

(#4) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends and requests the continued support and cooperation of institutional representatives, professional associations, and the State Department of Education in conducting manpower demand and supply analysis for selected fields and in identifying historical employment patterns with the objective of utilizing the results in the review of the new program proposals, the evaluation of existing programs, and the supplying of student career information.

D. Career Information

(#5) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses the efforts of the Alaska Occupational Information Coordinating Committee in the development of the Alaska Career Information System, and will continue to provide information on Alaska's postsecondary education programs for inclusion in that system.

E. Inter-state Planning

(#6) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses the concept of regional (multi-state) planning and resource sharing as exemplified by the efforts of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and the thirteen western compact states.

F. Student Loans

(#7) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education supports continued provision of educational opportunity and choice through a state-level student loan program which permits Alaskans to seek their educational goals where they best feel these goals can be met.

G. Graduate Fellowships

(#8) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education supports and encourages the continued development of Alaska's graduate programs of study where an expressed need is evident and the continued encouragement of attracting and enrolling qualified students through the establishment of state-funded graduate fellowships for selected programs in Alaskan institutions.

H. Value of Postsecondary Education

(#9) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that postsecondary institutions in the state, in cooperation with the Commission, work to provide some measures of the value of postsecondary education that is being provided to students in Alaska.

II. Responsiveness of the Postsecondary Education system in Alaska

A. Role of Governing and Coordinating Boards

(#10) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recognizes the responsibilities of the governing boards of the postsecondary education institutions in Alaska and endorses the present concept of a statewide postsecondary education agency as a coordinating board. The role of this agency should continue to be that of engaging in continuous statewide postsecondary education planning and the provision of independent and objective advice to the Governor, the Legislature, and the various components that comprise postsecondary education in the state.

B. Proprietary Institutions

(#11) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recognizes and endorses the valuable contribution to Alaska's postsecondary educational resources which is made by proprietary institutions operating in the state and will continue to include information on these resources in its annual directory of postsecondary educational institutions. Further, the Commission recognizes the need for more comprehensive, accurate information on proprietary education in Alaska and

will cooperate with the schools and their organizations in the development of an adequate information base on proprietary education.

C. Private Colleges and Universities

(#12) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recognizes and endorses the valuable contribution to Alaska's postsecondary educational resources which is made by private colleges and universities at little or no direct cost to the State of Alaska, and endorses the exploration of methods by which more state support and encouragement can be directed to these institutions.

D. Vocational-Technical Institutions

(#13) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recognizes and endorses the valuable contribution to Alaska's postsecondary educational resources which is made by the vocational-technical institutions operating in the state.

(#14) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses and recommends increased coordination in the formation and/or expansion of vocational-technical facilities and programs, and recommends that such coordination incorporate consideration of existing programs offered by community colleges and private proprietary schools.

E. Community Colleges

(i) General

(#15) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recognizes and endorses the unique role and mission of the community colleges as the primary means of providing for, and achievement of, access to postsecondary education.

(ii) Open Door Admissions

(#16) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses and recommends the continuation of "open door" admissions to the state's community colleges and the maintenance of low levels of tuition and fee charges for community college students.

(iii) Programs

(#17) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses the responsiveness and flexibility of community colleges to reflect local needs, and recommends the continuation of the balanced approach between academic, occupational/vocational, and general education, public interest, and personal development programs based upon the guidance and advice of local citizen policy advisory councils.

(#18) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that institutions continue to seek methods of incorporating the practical world of work into academic programs of study whenever appropriate and feasible, through such arrangements as internships, work-study, practica, etc.

F. Transfer of Credits

(#19) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that representatives of the four-year institutions, both public and private, work cooperatively with Commission staff in developing a guide on the transferability of course work and programs between and among Alaskan institutions, referring to applicable credit transfer and type of transfer (elective credits, major field of study credits, etc.).

G. Academic Program Offerings

(i) Register of Programs

(#20) Recommendations

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that information be submitted on all current postsecondary educational program offerings in the State by public, private, and proprietary institutions and that this information be kept in the Commission offices for dissemination as the official state "register of program offerings". Further, that this register will be changed as soon as possible after program additions, deletions, or modifications by each institution. Since this register will constitute the base data for all Commission dissemination of data and analysis of program offerings by postsecondary institutions in the state, it is the responsibility of the institutions to provide prompt and accurate information concerning their programs.

(ii) Program Review

(#21) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that Commission staff, in cooperation with representatives of public and private colleges and universities, work to establish acceptable criteria for academic program review at the state level.

(#22) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education requests institutional cooperation in reviewing academic programs offered in Alaska, with particular attention being given to those programs of study which appear to be duplicative or show evidence of persistent low productivity. This review will consist of a general program inventory and specific need, cost, demand, and quality criteria being developed for in-depth review.

(iii) New Programs

(#23) Recommendations

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that no new degree program or major course series be approved by the Board of Regents or trustees of an Alaskan postsecondary education institution until that proposal has been reviewed by the Commission and recommendations have been reported back to the appropriate board in accordance with AS 145.40.909(a) (1). Upon consideration of a new degree program or major course series by the governing board of an Alaskan postsecondary education institution, a letter of intent should be forwarded to the Commission to initiate this review process.

(#24) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that neither the Governor nor the Legislature approve, within the confines of their respective time schedules, the expenditure of state funds for the support of any new degree program in an Alaskan postsecondary education institution which has not undergone review by the Commission.

(iv) Degree Offerings and Programs

(#25) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that

each postsecondary education institution review its present or proposed catalog to ascertain what degree opportunities are being offered to prospective students and to compare these offerings with actual course and program availability to determine the timeliness of degree completion opportunities and report the findings of this review to the Commission.

(#26) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends the Chancellor for Community Colleges of the University of Alaska examine the use of Associate degree titles in the community colleges in the state, with the objective of ensuring consistency of usage among institutions, and report the results of this examination to the Commission.

(#27) Recommendation

The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends the University of Alaska review the use of its degree titles, beyond the Associate degree, to ensure continuity throughout the state system and continuity to listed and Board-approved degree program offerings and report the results of this review to the Commission.

(#28) Recommendation

The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that the private colleges and universities operating in Alaska review the use of their degree titles to ensure continuity with approved degree program offerings and report the results of these reviews to the Commission.

(v) Programs of Study in Professional Fields

(#29) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that the University of Alaska, in cooperation with appropriate agencies and groups, conduct specific professional field studies to evaluate the preparation and performance of program graduates and propose specific improvements, as needed.

H. Innovative Instructional and Delivery Methods

(#30) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education encourages and endorses institutional efforts and research into innovative

instructional delivery methods and recommends expanded state support for alternate forms of instruction in an effort to serve the needs of the non-traditional student and the needs of rural Alaska.

I. Statewide Vocational Education Planning

(#31) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses the work of the State Planning Council for Vocational Education and the State Advisory Council for Vocational Education for their work in the evaluation and planning for vocational/occupational education in the state through documents like the State Plan for Vocational Education and Articulation in Vocational Education.

J. Adult Basic Education

(#32) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education endorses the cooperative efforts of the public schools, the private contractors, the Native corporations, the private colleges and schools and the community colleges to eliminate functional illiteracy through the provision of Adult Basic Education programs throughout Alaska.

K. Community Schools - Community Service

(#33) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recognizes the overlapping responsibilities of the State Department of Education and the local school districts with the Board of Regents and the community colleges in offering community schools and community service courses and programs, and recommends that a study be conducted to identify and define these programs, their differences and their similarities, and delineate responsibilities between and among the responsible agencies, and, further, the Commission encourages cooperative planning to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts.

III. Resources Required to Support Postsecondary Education

A. Duplication and Competition

(#34) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education encourages the governing boards of the public and

private colleges and universities operating in Alaska to be particularly sensitive to the limited parameters of the state's resources, both human and fiscal, and cooperatively to avoid needless duplication and competition, especially within the confines of a restricted geographic area.

(#35) Policy Position

The Commission on Postsecondary Education encourages and endorses the maintenance of close cooperation and coordination among the state's community colleges, vocational-technical institutions and proprietary institutions to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts and unwarranted competition, particularly within the confines of a restricted geographic area.

B. Facilities Inventory Aid Utilization

(#36) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that a cooperative effort, involving Commission staff, institutional representatives, the Governor's Office of Budget and Management, and the Division of Legislative Finance, be made to determine a workable and continuing process of facilities inventory and utilization that can be used for all phases of educational planning and in reviewing capital budget requests.

C. Joint Use of Facilities

(#37) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that Alaska's colleges and universities, both public and private, explore and expand upon the joint use of facilities whenever possible.

D. Establishment of New Institutions

(#38) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska adopt a policy describing the criteria necessary for the establishment of new community colleges and extension centers and incorporate in those establishment criteria a review by the

Commission in accordance with AS 14.40.909(a) (1).

(#39) Recommendation

The Commission recommends that neither the Governor nor the Legislature approve, within the confines of their respective time schedules, the expenditure of state funds for the support of a proposed or newly established institution of postsecondary education or extension center which has not undergone review by the Commission.

E. Budgeting for Postsecondary Education

(i) General

(#40) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that the Governor's Office of Budget and Management and the Division of Legislative Finance continue working with Commission staff and the public institutions of postsecondary education in the refinement and improvement of a more descriptive budgeting system for postsecondary education, incorporating reporting requirements of various state and federal agencies.

(ii) Budget Review

(#41) The Commission recommends that neither the Governor nor the Legislature take final action, within the confines of their respective time schedules, on the budget requests, operating or capital, from institutions of postsecondary education for state assistance until and unless the budget requests have undergone review by the Commission in accordance with AS 14.40.909(a) (3).

(iii) Instructional Cost Study

(#42) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that an instructional cost study be conducted for Alaska's public postsecondary education institutions as a cooperative effort of the institutions, the Governor's Office of Budget and Management, the Division of Legislative Finance, and the Commission.

(iv) Formula Budgeting

(#43) Recommendation

The Commission on Postsecondary Education recommends that no new approaches to the funding methods for postsecondary education, such as formula budgeting, be made until such time as a comprehensive instructional cost study is conducted and analyzed and the applicability of such methods as formula budgeting are examined in reference to the results of such a study.